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ABSTRACT

A study evaluates the effectiveness of the third year of the Reading/Writing Immersion (R/WI) project in Manitoba designed to assist first-grade teachers in becoming more effective at working with students who are at-risk of failing to develop the reading and writing performance expectancies the teachers had for them. Subjects, the six remaining participating teachers in the project, were interviewed on a one-to-one basis. Interview data were organized into 11 topic areas: (1) meetings; (2) professional skills; (3) university personnel; (4) student support branch and principal support; (5) classroom teacher-resource teacher relationships; (6) R/WI classroom activities; (7) R/WI activities in the school; (8) student progress; (9) school conditions needing change or improvement; (10) final opinions about the Reading/Writing Immersion project; and (11) continuation of the project. Results indicated that the comments from the participating teachers were generally very positive and that the goals and the objectives of the project had been met. Thirty-six recommendations were presented based on the interview data. (The teacher interview schedule is attached.) (RS)

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READING/WRITING IMMERSION: A DECISION MAKING LITERACY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

TEACHER INTERVIEWS

YEAR THREE

JUNE 30, 1992

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READING/WRITING IMMERSION: A DECISION MAKING LITERACY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

**TEACHER INTERVIEWS
YEAR THREE**

INTRODUCTION

The Reading/Writing Immersion Project, approved for the four schools of Brooklands, David Livingstone, William Whyte, and Dufferin, officially began on September 14, 1989. This Project was designed to assist Grade 1 teachers in becoming more effective at working with students who are "at-risk" of failing to develop the reading and writing performance expectancies said teachers held for them. Since one of the purposes of this Project was to promote the Project throughout the four schools, a resource teacher from each of the schools was identified by the school's principal to take part. In these four schools, resource teachers function as collaborative, school-based consultants. It was envisioned that the consultative-collaborative nature of their role would serve to build an ethos, or climate for collective language arts efforts in each school. Collegial consultation efforts were perceived as one way of pooling and effectively multiplying the knowledge base and skills stemming from the Project. Therefore, a total of four Grade 1 teachers, four resource teachers, and three Faculty of Education (University of Manitoba) staff members took part in the Reading/Writing Immersion Project during the 1989/91 school years.

The Project was made up of four components. First, a study group component, which took place between September 1989 and December 1989. This component was conducted at the Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba, and involved the presentation and discussion of issues related to the teaching of reading and writing skills.

Second, an applied component that took place between January 1990 and June 1990. In this component, participants utilized their newly developed skills in their classrooms with students they identified as being at-risk of not meeting reading/writing performance

expectancies. Another aspect of the applied component involved the participants observing each other in the classroom setting. This allowed the teachers to view the modeling of a variety of teaching techniques. The observation sessions were also utilized to provide participants with constructive feedback regarding their instruction and to assist with the analysis of student performance.

The third component took place during the Year 2 of the Project (1990-91) and consisted of the extension of R/WI into additional classrooms in each of the schools. The participants from the four schools had made specific plans during Year 1 as to how they would approach the process of Project extension. The overall Project plan stipulated that there would be a major decrease in the involvement of the University personnel during Year 2 and, as a result, they played a much less active role in the Project during 1990-91. That is, during Year 2 they acted as consultants and became involved only when requested by school staff. The schools took over complete responsibility for all aspects of the R/WI Project.

The fourth and final component took place during the 1991-92 school year and continued the process of Project extension. This component introduced a further reduction of the involvement of the University personnel. Also in Year 3, the St. James-Assiniboia School Division No.2 (i.e., Brooklands School) opted out of the Project as they had acquired separate funding for an adaptation of the Reading/Writing Immersion Project. This adaptation extended the Project to a number of other schools in that Division.

At the time this report was written, two schools (i.e., David Livingstone Community School and Dufferin School) have made specific plans for the continuation and expansion of the Project. Both schools have received funds for this purpose from Winnipeg School Division No.1. One school, William Whyte, decided to discontinue the program.

An important aspect of this Project was that it was designed to operate as a collaborative model. That is, all of the participants were to work together to design the specific direction of the Project. The basic premise of the Project was that effective teachers are competent "decision makers" and that future professional growth is dependent on the ability of teachers to

monitor or reflect on their teaching performance. Therefore, the study group component of this Project was not the traditional, lecture style university class. The study group established agendas, topics for discussion, book study sessions, book fairs, cooperative reporting and other joint activities. In these sessions the university personnel acted as facilitators. A second aspect of the collaborative approach was that it allowed each school to develop their own unique program based on the specific characteristics of their school community.

One funding condition was that this Project be evaluated. Therefore, an evaluation plan was designed and accepted by the Project's two Management Committees (see Evaluation Outline, October 12, 1989). This plan called for a process evaluation (an evaluation of the implementation of the Project) during the Project's first year of operation and an outcome evaluation (effects of the Project on the students) to take place during Year 2 and 3. A two-part design was selected as it allowed for complete Project implementation prior to the assessment of student outcomes. The University personnel were assigned the responsibility of carrying out the process evaluation. The Research Assistant from Manitoba Education and Training's Inner City Initiative Branch and the Research Department of the Winnipeg School Division No.1 were responsible for the outcome evaluation.

Year One Evaluation.

Year 1 evaluation consisted of (a) four classroom teacher/resource teacher surveys, (b) two principal interviews, (c) an ethnographic component that provided a record of the classroom observations and study group sessions, and (d) two interviews with the university professors who acted as Project facilitators.

The results of the evaluations carried out in Year 1 of the R/WI Project were presented in two reports:

1. Bravi, G.D., Madak, P.R., & Kilarr, G. (1990). Reading/Writing Immersion: A Decision Making Literacy Development Project - Final Report: Year 1. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 327 845)

2. Bravi, G.D., Madak, P.R. & Kilarr, G. (1990). An Addendum To: Reading/Writing Immersion: A Decision Making Literacy Development Project - Fourth Teacher Survey And Summary Year 1. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 329 908)

Year Two Evaluation.

In Year 2, two Project personnel changes occurred. First, as commonly occurs in school divisions, there were personnel changes at three of the Project schools. Both Brooklands School and Dufferin School were assigned new resource teachers. Additionally, at David Livingstone School, the resource teacher who had been involved in the Project during Year 1 was assigned a role that minimized her contact with the R/WI classroom teacher.

Second, two of the University professors were on half-year sabbatical leaves. One of the staff on sabbatical leave remained an active Project participant, but the other had plans that did not allow for such involvement.

As planned, the University personnel continued with the process component of the evaluation, and the Research Assistant from Manitoba Education and Training's Inner City Initiative Branch and the Research Department of the Winnipeg School Division No.1 initiated the outcome evaluation of student progress.

The process component of the Year 2 evaluation was conducted by interviewing the eight participating teachers. The results of the evaluation carried out in Year 2 of the R/WI Project were presented in the report:

Bravi, G.D., Madak, P.R. & Richards, D. (1991). Reading/Writing Immersion: A Decision Making Literacy Development Project - Teacher Interviews: Year 2. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 336 734)

Year Three Evaluation.

In Year 3, no Project personnel changes occurred. However, St. James-Assiniboia School Division No.2 (i.e., Brooklands School) opted out of the Project at the beginning of the year, as they had acquired separate funding for an adaptation of the Reading/Writing

Immersion Project. This adaptation extended the Project to a number of other schools in that Division. Second, one of the University professors was on a half-year sabbatical leave and was not involved in the Project.

As planned, the University personnel continued with the process component of the evaluation, and the Research Department of the Winnipeg School Division No.1 continued the outcome evaluation of student progress. The process component of the Year 3 evaluation was conducted by interviewing the six remaining participants. This document provides a summary of those interviews.

METHOD

The methodology used for the Year 3 process evaluation was a teacher interview. As Year 3 was made up of only one major component, it was decided that a single data collection point would provide the necessary information. Once again, the evaluators decided that a one-to-one interview would provide more detailed data than would a paper-and-pen survey.

Instrument.

The interview schedule was designed to collect data about the processes used to accomplish the goals stipulated for Year 3 of the Project. The design of the interview schedule was a collaborative process that involved the University personnel, members of the Student Support Branch (Inner City Initiative Branch was renamed mid-year to Student Support Branch), and the Management Committee from Winnipeg School Division No.1. A copy of the interview schedule is presented in Appendix A.

Procedure.

All six of the Project participants were interviewed by a research assistant hired by the University personnel. The interviewer was not directly involved with the Project.

The interviews were conducted during the last two weeks of May and the first week of June 1992. In order to establish interview times that were convenient for the participants, the

interviewer called each individual and allowed them to set the meeting time. The interviews lasted approximately thirty-five to seventy minutes.

Each participant was asked if they would allow the interviewer to tape the interview. They were assured that only the interviewer would have access to the tapes and that the only purpose for taping was to ensure accuracy. In addition to the tape recording, the interviewer took written notes. The tapes were then transcribed and a written summary was provided to the authors of this document. As promised, neither the University personnel, Student Support Branch staff, nor Winnipeg School Division No.1 officials had access to the taped interviews.

TEACHER INTERVIEW RESULTS

All six of the Project participants agreed to be interviewed and to have the interview taped. To facilitate the reader's understanding of the interview data, the authors organized the results into ten topic areas. It should be noted that even though that the name of Inner City Initiative Branch had been changed to Student Support Branch, all the teachers interviewed continued to call the Branch by its former name.

For some questions the data were best organized by school. In order to maintain school anonymity, the numbers used to designate school data were randomly assigned for each question.

Meetings.

At the end of Year 2 it was recommended that (1) meetings be continued but on a less frequent basis, (2) the first item of business for the group should be the development of tentative goals and objectives for the meetings, (3) after the first group meeting University personnel should be notified as to whether or not their future attendance was desired, and (4) staff and administrative replacement be provided with a comprehensive introduction to the philosophy and goals of the Project.

Although the original grant did not include group meetings for Year 3 of the Project, the R/WI participants were given the option to hold meetings on a regular basis. Also, the Division was willing to cover the expenses for the meetings. The University personnel were not involved in these meetings, but were invited to attend on one occasion. However, due to other scheduled commitments, they were unable to attend. Since only one meeting was held, the University personnel were not invited again.

Though these meetings were not part of the original grant, because of Year 2 recommendations the evaluators felt it important that information be collected about them.

3. With regard to Year Three R/WI group meetings (when all three schools got together):

a. How many group meetings were held this year (1991-92)?

Two participants stated that one half-day meeting was held. A third respondent noted that one meeting was held and a fourth wasn't sure, but thought there was one meeting. A fifth respondent thought there were one or two meetings, but wasn't certain, and a sixth was very uncertain, but knew there were fewer than three meetings.

b. How would you judge the value of the meetings?

Three participants made positive comments. One said, "... it was excellent as a support group, were very valuable and would highly recommend them." A second noted that the meeting provided an "...opportunity to meet together, to discuss issues, and to have people listen to things that you really cared about." Another stated, "...it was valuable in that Inner City Initiative wanted to tell the participants that they had to do a certain thing, and that information was presented to the participants."

A number of negative comments were made by the participants:

- Five felt that the one meeting held was frustrating and valueless.
- Three thought that the meetings had little value since the schools were never on a common ground to begin with, they had all gone in different directions, and had very different views of the Project.

- Two participants noted that the meeting was specifically about assessment and some schools felt a bit angry because they were expected to mutually agree upon the type of assessment even though the school programs were different.
- Two felt that the meeting was an exercise in frustration where participants were griping and complaining.
- One mentioned that she thought the group had never become a cohesive, cooperative working group.
- Another thought that there was not a great willingness to listen to the opinion of others or a particular group.
- Finally, one stated that the meeting was valueless in that the Inner City consultant spent the entire meeting presenting information.

c. If you had a chance to improve the organization of the group meetings, what would you change to bring about this improvement?

Five participants responded to this item. One thought that this was not a valid question since the participants set their own meeting agendas. A second felt that the meeting was as well organized as could be. A third said, "...all of the information should be given to all of the groups at the same time and be equally shared." A fourth stated, "Designate some sort of leadership for the group, hopefully eliminating some of the competitiveness amongst the participants." Finally, a participant noted that "...from year one, the meetings should have been organized with some goals and attempted to achieve those goals."

d. Given that this was a collaborative Project, were you satisfied with the role you played in organizing and developing agendas for group meetings? Please provide a rationale for your answer.

Three of the participants responded that they were satisfied with the role they played in organizing and developing meeting agendas. These participants made five comments:

- Two stated that there was time provided for them to state their opinions and that they were free to put concerns, questions and future topics on the agenda.
- The meetings were not controlled nor contrived.
- In the beginning of the year a meeting should have been called to reestablish participant contact.
- The most difficult part of establishing an agenda was trying to get the different groups to agree, as each group had their own ideas about what was needed for their school.

Three stated that they were not satisfied with their role. They also provide five comments:

- Three commented that they did not have input into the agenda for the meeting that was held, did not feel as much a part of it as they could have been, and that rather than it being a collaborative Project, based on decisions by teachers, there was an unspoken agenda.
- One teacher attempted to call the meeting, but the agenda became that of the "Inner City" consultant.
- The only reason we met was because the principals recommend that a reading assessment be done, plus a recommendation from the University personnel as well.

Summary. - Even though previous participant interviews indicated that the group wanted to continue the meetings in Year 3, and this was recommended by the evaluators, only one group meeting was held this year.

Three participants felt the meeting was frustrating and valueless, and seem happy that no others were held. One participant had mixed feelings and two others had thought the meeting of value. These three participants noted that the meeting provided the group with a support network, a useful vehicle for sharing information and an opportunity to discuss issues.

On the basis of on the interviews, it appears that two factors may have played an important role in the demise of the group meetings. First, participant comments indicated that the Project developed differently at each school and thus, time would be better spent meeting with staff only from their school. Also, because the Project differed at each site, differences of opinion evolved that the group could not overcome. Second, it appeared that competition developed amongst the schools. The data did not present a clear picture of the nature of the competition, but several participants mentioned it.

Noticeable changes in the participants' opinions were found when Year 3 meeting data were compared to those of Years 1 and 2. A number of complaints about establishing meeting agendas and attending to task were made in Year 2. Participant consensus, however, was that the meetings were valuable, worthwhile and helpful. It therefore appears, that the minor problems encountered in Year 2, escalated in Year 3. In our opinion these problems escalated

because cohesive leadership did not develop and the competition that developed amongst the schools became more intense.

Professional Skills.

In Year 1, the study group component, held at the Faculty of Education, was designed to discuss issues, attitudes and skills related to the teaching of reading and writing. It was in this component that the majority of the new instructional techniques were presented. The use of these techniques was honed during site visitations and group observations. The original grant did not include such meetings for Year 2 or 3 of the Project.

During Year 2, the participants obtained a grant that allowed them to hold group meetings designed to continue idea sharing and group problem solving. These meetings constituted the only organized professional development activity for 1990-91. Therefore, we felt it necessary to explore the skill development that took place during the year. After reviewing the data from that evaluation (Bravi, et. al., 1991), we recommended that participants continue to (1) be given responsibility for determining their future professional development needs and (2) use the "teacher-as-decision-maker" approach.

In Year 3, the school division provided funds for a continuation of group meetings, however, only one meeting was held. In addition, the participants had the option to call upon the University personnel or to hire others to provide professional development workshops.

8. Did the Project provide you with any new skills this year? If so, what are they?

Four of the six participants indicated that they had acquired new skills during Year 3 of the Project. Two others noted that their skills had been refined.

The following were noted as skills acquired or refined during Year 3:

- Four individuals stated that they had developed new assessment skills:
  - have become more confident about how to find information regarding early reading skills;
  - acquired more evaluation techniques and am becoming quicker in picking up clues and signals the children are sending;

- learning more in the area of assessment;
- started taking Running Records this year;
- I learned more about how to pin point reading readiness skills; and,
- to get good assessment information you need to spend more time with individual children.

- One noted that they had learned about the Bridge Program.
- Another felt they had become more knowledgeable about reading readiness skills.
- One indicated that they learned they needed to work more on individual reading programs.
- Finally, one respondent said that she had refined the procedures used in her Writing Process lessons.

Two participants stated that they had not learned anything new during Year 3. They did not elaborate on why this happened.

Summary. - Participant comments indicated that in Years 1 and 2 they made substantial gains in the ability to make decisions. They also noted growth in self-confidence, the tolerance of individual differences, and a wide variety of professional skills. Furthermore, the majority stated that they had incorporated these skills and changes into their everyday classroom procedures.

In Year 3 it appeared that the largest gains in professional skill were related to the area of student assessment. Four of the participants indicated this growth. Another participant noted that she had "honed" skills learned in the first two years of the Project and the sixth stated that she had learned nothing new during Year 3.

University Personnel.

In Year 1 the participants thought that University personnel provided too much information too quickly. As a result, we recommended that the University personnel review the appropriateness of the amount of information they supplied. The recommendations for Year 2 were that regularly scheduled classroom visits be reinstated and a visitation schedule be collaboratively developed at the second group meeting.

As planned, there was another major decrease in the involvement of the University personnel during Year 3 and the participating schools were to become more responsible for the Project. In 1991-92, one of the University personnel acted as school resource person and became involved on a request basis. This included: (a) help with the extension of the program to other interested school staff; (b) the provision of in-services; (c) the development and distribution of materials; (d) technical assistance to R/WI participants, (e) the demonstration of assessment and instructional procedures; (f) classroom observations; and (g) presentations at conferences and school in-services.

Both University personnel conducted the process evaluation, attended Management Committee meetings, reviewed the Division's outcome evaluation report, conferred with personnel from the Student Support Branch of Manitoba Education and Training, and made presentations at professional conferences.

1. University personnel played a different role in Year 3 than in Years 1 and 2, please comment regarding this difference.

All six of the participants comment about the difference. The following positive comments were made:

- Two participants noted that a major difference was that University personnel met with them only when requested and that the schools could stipulate the specific purpose(s) of the meetings.
- Two participants stated that when University personnel came to their schools, they were always eager to please, really respected what the participants needed and were very supportive when they were trying new techniques.
- Another participant indicated that University personnel were always available when requested.
- Finally, two participants indicated that the University contact person provided excellent workshops for the extension classroom teachers.
- One teacher noted that what they asked the University contact person to do, he did.
- Another stated that the University contact person acted as a sounding board for her and other teachers in the school, and that he was always willing to come and do what they requested.

a. Did you request any assistance from University personnel?

Four of the six participants stated that they had requested assistance. The other two stated that they had not.

b. If yes, what did you request?

The following requests were indicated:

- "We asked them to get together with the other teachers and us to talk about how we were going to take the data that we needed to give the stats people. We had this kind of general meeting about that, and the University contact person helped us somewhat with that."
- "I didn't request help because I found that when I asked them to come out they didn't come on time. They constantly were canceled. So I didn't ask them to come."
- "The University contact person helped me with assessments. He was a big help in that area."
- "I requested help with reading assessments."
- "We asked the University contact person to talk to us about spelling."
- "We used the University contact person as a sounding board."
- "We asked the University contact person to come in and provide workshops to the entire group."

c. What is your opinion of the assistance you received?

- Four participants stated that the assistance they received was excellent.
- One participant noted that, "All of the staff involved in the workshops very much enjoyed them and felt they learned from them."
- Another participant felt that the University contact person was good to listen to us and to help us interpret things so we didn't feel hard done by.
- One appreciated the collaborative meetings.
- Another respondent indicated that she really welcomed the support and assistance because this helped to keep her on track.
- Two participants felt that they did not receive adequate assistance.
- Finally, one participant felt that the University contact person had a condescending attitude.

d. In retrospect, would you have change anything for Year 3?

- Four participants stated that they would have liked more contact with University personnel.
- Two teachers felt that it would have been beneficial if University personnel had acted as a liaison with other Project members.
- One participant noted that the extension classroom teachers needed to be more familiar with the University personnel. They felt that this would have resulted in their being invited into more classrooms.
- One of the participants felt that asking for assistance was awkward and, as a result, would have preferred it if the Project proposal had stipulated a role for University personnel.
- One teacher indicated the University personnel needed to be more school based this year than they had been in the past.
- Another participant stated "... I don really have power to change a lot of things I would have wanted to change. What was in my power I did change. I don't think I could do things differently than what I did this year."

Summary. - All six of the participants commented about the difference in the University's role in Year 3. Four of the participants stated that they had asked for assistance and these four participants rated the assistance as being excellent. The most common requests were to (1) provide assistance in the area of assessment, (2) provide workshops and help related to the extension of the Project, and (3) act as a "sounding board" for new ideas and strategies.

All participants suggested that they would like to have had more contact with University personnel than was provided in Year 3. Two participants felt that more expansion teachers would have invited University personnel into their classrooms if they had been better acquainted with them.

Two participants were unhappy with the University personnel. One stated that University personnel didn't come on time or canceled meetings and another felt the University personnel had condescending attitudes.

Student Support Branch and Principal Support.

In Year 1 and 2 the following recommendations were made (1) principals should play a more active part in the R/WI Project, (2) Student Support Branch should continue to provide the same level of support as in the previous year, (3) school administrators should discuss with all staff the goals, objectives, and implementation plans for Year 3 of the Project, (4) school administrators should spend more time actively promoting the extension of the Project, and (5) school administrators should be more involved in R/WI meetings and discussion held in their schools.

All change requires the support of those having direct control over the program and program staff. This section of the evaluation collected participant perceptions of this support.

2. What is your opinion of the support the R/WI Project received in Year 3 from:

a. Student Support Branch?

The participants made the following positive about the support received from the Student Support Branch:

- Two participants stated that the Branch consultant's assessment assistance was very useful.
- Two teachers indicated that the Branch was very good about giving the Project money.
- One respondent stated, "I guess I can say I got some support from them."
- Another noted that she always knew that the Branch consultant was there if she was needed and she has always been excellent.

The following negative comments were made about the support provided:

- Two participants felt that the Branch imposed student evaluation procedures on them and that their suggestions about the evaluation were not listened to.
- One participant indicated that she thought the Branch consultant continually change her expectations regarding student evaluation procedures.
- One respondent stated, "I didn't really receive any support. To tell you the honest truth, there wasn't much happening this year, other than trying to survive."

- Another stated that the support was minimal.
- One participant felt that since the Branch supplied the funds, the Project participants had to listen to the suggestions made by the Branch.

b. your principal?

The participants noted the following positive aspects regarding the support provided by their principals:

- Three participants felt that their principals had developed their own versions of Reading/Writing Immersion for their school.
- Two participants found their principals to be very supportive.
- Two other participants found their principals to be supportive, but would have liked them to have spent more time in their classrooms and provided more time for meetings.
- Two teachers noted that it was obvious that their principals supported the Project as they will be continuing with this initiative next year.
- Finally, one participant stated that her principal made R/WI a priority and brought in other support staff from the Division to do workshops.

The following negative aspects regarding the support provided by principals were reported by the participants:

- Two participants indicated that their principals' input had always been zero, and as a result, they did not receive any support this year.
- One respondent would liked to have seen more support in the area of meeting times when the whole group could get together.
- One respondent stated that, "while I am not faulting the principal, however, I did not receive a lot of specific support".
- Finally, one respondent stated that she was disappointed in the lack of principal involvement and recommended that there be more.

Summary. - In Years 1 and 2 a high level of satisfaction was expressed concerning the support provided by the Student Support Branch. However, in Year 3 there was a mixed opinion concerning the support provided by the Student Support Branch. While a majority of the participants felt that the support had always been excellent and that the assistance with student assessment was very useful, some thought that the Branch was imposing student

evaluation procedures on them. One indicated confusion regarding role played by Branch personnel.

Throughout the Project there was mixed opinion concerning principal support. In Years 1, 2, and 3, most participants stated that their principals had provide some support for them and the Project. Even though noting some support, these participants indicated dissatisfaction with the amount of time (1) principals spent in their classrooms and (2) provided for meetings and consultation.

On all three surveys, two participants reported that they received little or no support from their principal.

Classroom Teacher - Resource Teacher Relationships.

Two forms of collaboration were critical to this Project. First, the participating resource teachers were to promote the use of R/WI strategies at all grade levels by consulting and collaborating with any teacher requesting assistance in the areas of reading and writing.

Second, the participants (i.e., the classroom teacher and the resource teacher) from each school were to work together to design the specific direction the Project would take in their school. The ability of the classroom teacher and the resource teacher to work collaboratively with other teachers was of particular concern during Year 3 of the Project.

Regarding the collaborative aspects of the Project, the following recommendations were made as a result of the process evaluations done at the end of Years 1 and 2: (1) the partnership between the classroom and resource teacher; (2) the resource teacher should spend more time expanding the Project to other classrooms and less time working in the original R/WI classroom; (3) more collaboration time should be provide to work with both the original and expansion teachers; and (4) in order to help the original participants collaborate more effectively with the expansion teachers, a consultation-collaboration training component should be developed.

The following questions explored the consultative-collaborative aspects of the participant relationships.

4. A cooperative and collaborative partnership between participating classroom teachers and resource teachers was built into the R/WI Project. Please comment on this cooperation and collaboration in Year 3 with regard to the following areas.

a. Do you feel that you have been given adequate time to consult and collaborate with your partner?

Two participants, both resource teachers, stated that they had been given adequate time to consult and collaborate with their partners. The other four participants stated that inadequate time had been provided. As can be seen, resource teachers tended to feel they had more time to collaborate. This is quite likely due to the consultative-collaborative nature of their role in the Division.

The participants supplied the following comments about question 4.a.:

- Three participants stated that their partners were overbooked, had a heavy workload, and therefore, it was difficult to schedule time with them.
- Two participants noted that meeting times were built in to the school's timetable.
- Another two teachers felt that meetings times were restricted due to layoffs in the school.
- One resource teacher felt that enough time was provided for meetings with her original partner, but not for meetings with the expansion teachers.
- Another resource teacher noted that enough time was available because part of her assigned job was to provide support in her partner's classroom.
- Finally, one respondent stated, "This year there was no connection between resource and Grade 1."

b. Describe the role that each of you played in the Project, and how these roles were determined.

As this Project emphasized the teacher as a decision maker, the participants at each site were expected to determine the nature of the Project at that site. They also established the role that each played. Many variations occurred. As a result, the data is best understood when organized according to school.

School #1. The participants at this school had many common perceptions concerning the role each played in the Project.

Together, the partners assessed the children in the Project classroom to provide baseline information. The classroom teacher, after discussion with the resource, made the final decision as to which children would be in the small R/WI groups.

R/WI sessions were begun in October and three, 10 week sessions were held. These sessions were held in the classroom and were one half hour in duration. In each session the were two groups of two children. The classroom teacher worked with one group and the resource teacher with the other. A teaching assistant supervised the rest of the class. At the end of each ten week session the participants decided which students should be released from the group and which should continue.

The roles for the participants at this school were determined prior to the arrival of the new resource teacher.

School #2. The participants at this school had many differing opinions about the role each played in the Project.

Both agreed that the partners at this school discussed which children should be in the R/WI groups, but since the classroom teacher knew the children best she had the final say.

The resource teacher indicated that each partner played an equal role in designing instruction for and teaching the R/WI groups.

The classroom teacher stated that she set up the activities, but since she did not have time, her teaching assistant provided the instruction for the R/WI groups. She also noted that the assistant did many of the assessments. The classroom teacher also indicated that they didn't spend much time working with small groups in her classroom.

Neither respondent explained how the roles were determined. No information was given about group size or the temporal aspect of the R/WI session.

School #3. The participants at this school had many common perceptions concerning the role each played in the Project.

The role of the resource teacher was only consultative in nature. The resource teacher noted that the classroom teacher used her mainly as a sounding board.

The classroom teacher was the person who ultimately had responsibility for the R/WI students in her classroom. She felt that her main objective for the year was to improve the R/WI program in her classroom. She felt that the major problem she had to work out was how to continue the program without another adult in the classroom.

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Neither respondent explained how the roles were determined. No information was given about group size or the temporal aspect of the R/WI session.

c. How successful do you feel the consultative-collaborative aspect of the Project has been? Please provide a rationale for this judgment.

All six participants felt that the consultative-collaborative aspect of the Project had been very successful. Typical comments included:

- Two participants noted that the consultative-collaborative aspect of the Project was fantastic.
- Two others stated that this aspect was very successful.
- Another thought it to be very valuable.
- The other participant stated that they had a really good, working relationship with their partner.

The reasons given for these judgments were:

- Four participants noted that this relationship allowed them to use colleagues as sounding boards and provided them with the emotional support needed when one is making changes.
- Another respondent noted that this aspect was successful only when they were provided with adequate meeting time.

d. If you were starting Year Three over, would you make any changes with regard to the partnership? If yes, what changes would you make?

Of the six participants, two stated that they would not make any changes. However, four indicated that they would like to make changes and made the following suggestions:

- Two participants felt that they would have liked to have had more time to consult and collaborate with their partners.
- Another respondent felt that she would have liked to have spent more time consulting and collaborating with her partner, but stated that the problem wasn't one of time. This participant indicated that she couldn't really pin point why they hadn't spent more time together.
- One respondent stated that she would have liked to have had her partner in her room more often, but knew that this wasn't possible because of her partner's other duties.
- One participant noted that she would have liked to have had more time to spend with students and felt that daily contact would have been best.

Summary. - As in Years 1 and 2, there was overwhelming support for the collaborative aspect of the Project. The participants felt that collaboration helped to produce the outcomes they desired and provided them with a partner they could trust. A few minor changes were suggested. The one suggested most often was that more time be provided for consultation and collaboration. In addition, they noted that if they had had more time they could have been more effective. The only negative responses were also directed at the lack of time for consultation and collaboration with their partner.

The data also indicated that there were few commonalties in the collaborative relationship established at each school. The joint effort at each school led to unique developments that seemed to reflect that particular context and the personality of the participants. At one of the schools, however, there was a difference of opinion regarding how the partners functioned during the year. The major difference of opinion was about the amount and frequency of classroom assistance.

In our opinion, the data supported the idea that the more active the participants are in making school level decisions, the better the odds are for continued action and support after the Project initiators leave the scene.

R/WI Classroom Activities.

At the end of Years 1 and 2, the participants at each school developed their plan for the following year. Included in these plans were (a) the R/WI activities to be used during Years 2 and 3, (b) who (i.e., whole class, select group, or both) would be exposed to these procedures, (c) how those to be exposed would be selected, and (c) whether or not the R/WI student group would change or remain static.

The data collected for the Year 1 and 2 process evaluations led to the following recommendations (1) continued use of R/WI procedures with the entire class as well as with the select group(s); (2) procedures should continue to be modified and adapted to meet the needs of individual students; (3) assessment procedures should continue to be modified and

adjusted to reflect the goals and objectives of each program; and (4) when students transfer to other schools, student information from the R/WI Project should be forwarded to the receiving school and given to the parents.

The following questions collected data about R/WI classroom activities for Year 3 of the Project.

5.a. During Year 3, did you run R/WI activities with your whole class, a select group, or both?

School #1. At this site, one participant initially stated that in her class only whole class activities were provided Questions asked later in the interview indicated, however, that activities were also provided for select groups.

The other participant indicated that both whole class and select group activities were provided. She also noted that these activities were "intertwined."

Additionally, one participant noted that most of the activities (i.e., both instructional and assessment) were provided by a teaching assistant.

School #2. For this question, one participant indicated that only whole class activities were carried out. In response to later questions she also noted that select children and select groups of children got additional assistance after whole class instruction. This additional assistance focused on providing additional help with what was taught to the whole class.

The other participant at this site stated that activities were provided for both the whole class and select groups of students.

One participant noted that in the beginning of the year she worked with the select group of students while an instructional assistant worked with the rest of the class. However, later in the year the rest of the class worked independently while she worked with the select group.

School #3. One participant at this school stated that since she did not have a classroom, this question did not seem to apply to her situation. In response to a later question, this participant noted that she worked with select groups of students in a number of classrooms.

The other participant indicated that she ran R/WI activities with the whole class and select groups.

5.b. If with the whole class, describe these activities. Do these activities differ from those used last year, and if so how?

School #1. The participants at this school both stated that they did not do much that was different during Year 3.

One participant noted that she added the use of Running Records to her assessment repertoire.

School #2. At this site, both participants indicated that the activities did not differ significantly from those used in the previous year. However, one participant noted that the major difference in Year 3 was that she adjusted activities slightly so that the class was able to work independently while she worked with the select group.

One participant noted that they really worked on was not singling out students who needed extra assistance since they felt that this would have a negative effect on student self-esteem.

School #3. One participant indicated that other than trying a few new ways to run activities she used last year, nothing was new. For example, she used sentence rebuilding, simple games and many computer activities.

The other participant stated that since she didn't have a classroom, this question didn't apply to her.

5.c. If with a select group, how many kids are you working with in your classroom this year? How did you select them?

School #1. At this school one participant did not provide an answer to this question.

Due to an error during the interview, the other participant was not asked this question.

School #2. One participant noted that each of her selected groups consisted of four students, but she did not indicate how many select groups she worked with during the year.

The other participant stated that she did not work with select groups, but indicated that select groups (work groups) were identified after the whole class instructional period. These groups were provided with extra assistance in learning the objectives for that class period.

One participant was not asked the second part of this question.

The other participant stated that student selection was based on reading miscue information, and somewhat on the basis of student motivation and attitude.

School #3. The participants at this site indicated that they worked with three groups of four students in the original R/WI classroom. Each participant worked with two students in each of the groups. If a student did not make satisfactory progress during a 10-week R/WI period, they were carried over for one additional 10-week period.

One participant noted that she worked with select groups in other classrooms, but did not indicate how many of these groups she served.

The following selection criteria were used: (a) Marie Clay's Letter Identification Test; (b) writing samples; (c) a teacher developed sight vocabulary test; (d) the teacher's judgment about the students' maturity, general readiness and potential (i.e., they selected only students they thought would profit from additional help); and (e) student attendance (i.e., they selected only students who had good attendance records).

The classroom teacher had the final say regarding which students participated in the select groups.

5.d. Has group membership changed during the year? Why or why not?

School #1. Both participants stated that group membership changed during the year.

One felt that these changes simply reflected the transience of the student population at the school.

The other stated that group membership was regularly changed because there were so many needy students and all should have equal time in the program. When asked if student transience was an issue, the participant felt that it played only a minor role.

School #2. One participant stated that she couldn't answer the question as she hadn't been in contact with the classroom in some time. She did not provide information about what was occurring in the extension classrooms.

The other participant noted that there were two reasons why group membership changed: (i) student transfers and (ii) discontinuance due to student achievement.

School #3. One participant responded, "Yes and no, we had criteria that they could only remain in the program for two, ten-week sessions." Further, students would be discontinued if they didn't need any more help or if the teachers felt the student wasn't profiting from the program.

The other participant said yes, and sometimes even during the middle of a ten-week block. The following two reasons for group membership changes were given: (i) poor school attendance; and (ii) some children were discontinued because they just weren't ready or mature enough for the program.

5.e. Describe the R/WI activities that you used with this group? Do these activities differ from those used last year, and if so how?

School #1. At this site one participant stated, "No, I will not describe them. If they want to hear them, they can come and see them. I will not go into detail describing the lessons that we did for the last eight months of the school year." The participant then noted that the activities were very similar to what was done the previous year and that the activities are contained in the Reading/Writing Immersion Handbook. This person then once again emphasized the fact that the activities did not differ from those used the previous year.

The other participant stated that the activities did not differ from the previous year. She then went on to indicate that there were some differences since this year her instructional assistant did the activities with the select group. She stated, "Last year it was me or it was "my partner", so, there are certain things I won't ask an aide to do."

One participant mentioned the following examples activities: (i) making pattern books; (ii) teaching consonant sounds; (iii) memorizing sight words; (iv) reading activities; and (v) identifying words they knew in a story.

School #2. Both participants indicated that they used the same activities with some minor adaptations.

One participant thought that the assessment procedures had been slightly changed "... because 'they' wanted the assessment to be pretty uniform in terms of the three schools."

One participant indicated that, as is always the case, modifications were made to meet individual student needs. She also indicated that some new work activities had been developed in order to incorporate cooperative learning ideas into the program.

School #3. At this site one participant noted that the following activities had been used: (i) the Bridge Program; (ii) reading patterns books, predictable books, trade books and picture books; (iii) lots of alphabet games; (iv) sight word activities; (v) language development activities; and (vi) group reading activities.

The other participant cited these activities: (i) the Writing Process Model; (ii) letter identification; (iii) phonics; (iv) alphabet knowledge; (v) book handling activities; and (vi) reading pattern books.

Summary. - As in Years 1 and 2 of the Project, all sites indicated that they were providing R/WI activities for the whole class and a select group of students. Once again, the data indicated that a wide variety of activities were being used. The participants also noted that the activities used in Year 3 did not differ much from those used in Year 2. When changes were made, it appeared that they were made to adjust programming to meet specific student needs. One participant noted that programming would always change or be adjusted to meet individual student needs.

Though the schools have never used identical student selection criteria, there were always some similarities. At each site, some form of assessment was used for evaluating (1) letter identification; (2) writing samples; (3) oral reading ability; and (4) word identification.

All schools also employed subjective teacher judgment when selecting R/WI students. Interview data for Year 3 provide information similar to that of previous years.

An error in the interviewing process resulted in data not being provided for one school concerning R/WI group size. At one school six groups of two students each were involved in R/WI activities. The interviews indicated that another school did not work with identified groups, rather, at the end of whole class instruction additional support provided to students who were still having difficulty. This procedure was used so as not to label students.

The most common explanation for changes in group membership was student mastery of objectives. At one site, however, students who the teacher felt were not profiting from instruction or who had poor attendance were removed from the group. Participant responses also indicated that student mobility caused grouping difficulties at some sites.

Though not a part of this question, it should be noted that students in other classes and at other grade levels were also included in R/WI activities. The extension of the Project will be discussed in greater depth in the next section.

R/WI Activities in the School.

As stated in the Introduction, the fourth component of this Project was the extension of R/WI into additional classrooms. The participants from the three schools had made specific plans during Years 1 and 2 as to how they would approach the process of Project extension.

In previous years the following recommendations were made concerning Project expansion (1) Project philosophies, goals, objectives, and procedures should be expanded to other classrooms; (2) participation in the Project be on a voluntary basis; and (3) the original participants should cease or drastically reduce the amount of direct service they provide to expansion classrooms.

Participant opinions and impressions concerning Project expansion were sampled by the following questions.

6.a. Describe the R/WI activities you and your counterpart have carried out in additional classrooms in your school.

School #1. At this school one participant said, "I haven't." When asked to elaborate, she stated, "And, I could not speak for my partner. I don't know."

The other participant stated, "I think I'll pass on that one." She went on to state that she did not have responsibility for the extension grades, but that she thought some things might be going on in the Grade 2 classrooms. In response to another question, it was clear that this participant worked with other teachers, but she wasn't sure if this was part of the R/WI Project or some other school program.

School #2. One participant stated, "I have not carried out anything in additional classrooms. I know X has worked with the Kindergarten kids, and she does some very beginning reading-writing activities. She also works with students in my class when there is a need. She's been working with a Grade 3 class. She has, you know, she's assigned to that teacher, but she has worked on specific reading and writing activities there with them. But that's you know, that's her role as a teacher. That's why she was hired here, so that's also part of her job."

The other participant indicated the following, "Very, very few this year because we have had a lack of support time being given. So it's been very, very little. It's continued in one classroom we had started in last year. We haven't been able to expand very much because we have cut personnel every single year." She later added, "There's apathy towards this program at this school. There really, really is. So you can't make people do it. So we haven't."

School #3. One participant stated, "We have. We have presented the program to the entire school and the types of activities we did." She later added, "We did some small group presentations of strategies and ideas that we learned throughout the program. Then we tried to act as facilitators to support the needs they felt were important for them this year."

The other participant stated, "What we do with other classrooms is we have meetings together. We have early dismissals when these happen." Later she noted, "I go into all the other classrooms. I do the same thing with other teachers as I do in the original R/WI classroom. The collaboration was not as easy with them because they were unused to it. But, they were willing, and they were eager, and they recognized the value of the program. And so, it's grown very well, the collaboration with them this year is much closer to what I do with X." Finally, the participant indicated that she and her partner are attempting to provide training similar to that provided for them in Year 1 of the Project. However, they have found this difficult to do as they meet only one half hour a month.

6.b. How many other teachers have you worked with; and what grade level(s) do these teachers teach?

School #1. One participant said, "I've been close with, working together with the other Grade 1 teacher. We have planning time together. It's just the sharing of techniques and activities I've used."

The other participant said, "I've worked with the fours, fives, and sixes, so I work with six teachers, plus the R/WI teacher." Later this participant added, "If it means like, do we do Reading/Writing Immersion with the other teachers, then it's no."

School #2. At this site one participant said, "Last year I worked with the Kindergarten. We worked with Grades 1, 2, and 3." When asked who did you work with this year, she replied, "Grades 1, 2, and 3."

The other participant stated, "I haven't with other teachers in Year 3."

School #3. At this site one participant indicated she had worked with five teachers in Grades 1, 2, and 3.

The other participant noted that she had worked with four teachers in Grades 1, 2, and 3.

6.c. Do you feel that you have been given adequate time to consult and collaborate with other teachers?

School #1. One participant indicated that she had lots of time to collaborate with other teachers, but wasn't sure that this was part of the R/WI Project. She later noted that she was consulting about language arts activities in other rooms, but it just wasn't being called R/WI.

The other participant said, "Oh, yes. Yeah, it's built into our schedule, where the Grade 1 teacher and I have prep time together."

School #2. At this site one participant said, "In this year? No, no. Absolutely none."

The other participant stated, "Absolutely not. It's, as I say, an apathy from the top down. They're not making an effort to make this a priority in the school. It's died a natural death. It's happening every day at the local level in the original classroom. Beyond that, no."

School #3. One participant said, "No, we need more time," However, in later comments this participant indicated that she needed more when working with some teachers than with others. Therefore, she felt that she could not say that she needed more time for all the teachers.

The other participant said, "I think it would have been nice if we could have had more class visitations, but these are very hard to schedule. I think we needed more meeting time for discussing, in specific grade levels perhaps, where more ideas and strategies might be shared."

6.d. Describe the R/WI services you have provided to the teacher(s) and children (e.g., observing, ideas, etc.).

School #1. One participant noted that she and another teacher shared materials and instructional ideas. She also indicated that she was a member of a committee selecting professional development activities, in the area of language arts, for the entire staff. As a member of this committee she also felt that she was sharing R/WI ideas with the whole staff rather than just with individual teachers.

The other participant said, "We did very little direct service. It's mostly collaboration with the classroom teacher and it's whole class work. I help them develop instructional activities that meet the needs of the kids. That's really hard to do. We have a lot of teacher assistant and volunteer time. I work a lot with these assistants and volunteers."

School #2. At this site, one participant indicated that she had spent 5 out of 6 days, every other 6 week period, in the original R/WI classroom. She said, "I have been spending a lot of time in her room." She noted that she hadn't done any formal teaching in other classrooms. Later, she noted that she and her partner had been in-servicing small groups of teachers.

The other participant said, "The only thing I've done is some in-servicing. We have a kind of a set period where we do some in school in-servicing. I haven't had any time given to me to work in other teachers' classrooms."

School #3. One participant stated, "I tried to act as a facilitator, to find things that the other teachers have wanted to know about. As far as going into other classrooms, I didn't do that."

The other participant listed the following services: (i) arranged for the University contact person to do in-services and other activities; (ii) brought in two reading clinicians for workshops;,(iii) had sessions where strategies were shared; (iv) held an in-service in the beginning of the year; and (v) had planning sessions for how to continue the program next year.

6.e. With regard to the services described in d above:

(1) What worked?

School #1. One participant stated the team teaching procedures worked very well.

The other participant said, "I really can't comment on it because it really hasn't happened yet, so that would really be tough. I don't know."

School #2. One participant noted that what worked depended on the child one was speaking of and what was going on for that child. She later said, "I do feel that all the children in the groups have experienced success. Maybe not gigantic leaps, but they have all experienced a some degree of success even though that might have been small at times."

The other participant stated, "The sharing sessions with the staff were really, really the best."

School #3. One participant felt that what worked best was having speakers come in and discuss various facets of the program.

The other participant felt that working with other teachers' students in small group sessions was what worked best.

(2) What didn't work?

School #1. One of the participants said, "I really can't answer that."

The other participant felt that the teachers were very eager to have her take students out of their classes and "fix them up." She felt she was unable to find a way to convince them otherwise.

School #2. One of the participants did not provide an answer to this question.

The other participant once again felt that this depended on the child one was working with and other factors.

School #3. One participant, maybe in jest, indicated that what didn't work was giving the staff an hour off school, and providing them with donuts and coffee. She also indicated that with some teachers, collaboration just didn't work. She also noted that this might have been due to not having an adequate amount of time for relationship building.

The other participant wasn't really sure what didn't work.

(3) What would you do differently?

School #1. One participant said, "I wish I knew what I would do differently." Later she indicated that what was needed was a whole school environment predicated on Reading/Writing Immersion ideas.

The other participant indicated that she couldn't answer the question.

School #2. One participant said, "No, no, I don't think I would change many of the activities because I vary the activities every year. There's no year exactly like the next year. Each year is different and depends on the children I've got."

The other participant did not respond to this question.

School #3. One participant said, "I would like to see more classroom visitations and more consultation time."

The other participant felt that they would wait to be asked before in-servicing the teachers. She also noted that early in the Project a number of support personnel worked in R/WI classrooms, but did not have specified roles. She thought this caused other teachers to question the Project and to have unrealistic ideas about it.

Summary. - There were four major findings regarding the R/WI expansion activities. First, as in previous years, the majority of the Project participants were involved in expanding R/WI to additional classrooms in their schools. However, some participant comments indicated that they were less involved than in Year 2. The most often cited reason for being less involved was a lack of time. The data indicated that at one school R/WI expansion was keeping pace with what happened in Year 2. At a second school, expansion activities seemed to have accelerated. But, at a third school the participants had difficulty deciding whether or not the Project had "died a natural death" or a few activities had been carried out. At the third school, comments made by the participants indicated that the expansion process has come to a halt due to (a) general apathy concerning the program; (b) a lack of time for participants to be involved in Project expansion; and (3) the failure to give the program the necessary priority.

Second, in Year 2 the majority of the participants reported they were working directly with students in the expansion classrooms. This finding was in opposition to the goal of empowering teachers (i.e., helping them to become able to prevent or deal with problems). The evaluators recommended that this type of activity cease or be drastically reduced in Year 3. The participant responses in the Year 3 interviews indicated that very little direct service was provided to students in expansion classrooms. The lack of direct service appears, however, to have happened by accident more than by design. That is, some of the participants reported that they did not provide this service because they lacked the time rather than because they were attempting to provide a more indirect or consultative-collaborative model of service.

Third, there were mixed reactions as to whether or not the participants felt they had been given adequate time to consult and/or collaborate with the expansion teachers. This was a change from Year 2, when the majority felt that they had been given adequate time. At the site where the participants indicated the fewest expansion activities had taken place, the lack of time was perceived as one of the major reasons why such activities had not occurred. Responses from another site indicated that adequate time had been provided and at the remaining site one

participant said yes and the other no. The responses in this section also indicated that most of the participants did some inservice work, shared materials, and discussed instructional ideas.

Fourth, as in Year 2, participant comments indicated that consultation, collaboration, and other cooperative activities were what had worked best when expanding the Project. Two participants commented that consultation and collaboration did not work with all teachers and gave the following reasons for this: (a) some teachers wanted problem students removed from the classroom to be taught by others; and (b) other teachers either did not understand the consultative-collaborative approach and how to work within it, or felt uncomfortable with the process.

Student Progress.

One of the Project goals for Year 2 and Year 3 was to collect and maintain performance data on R/WI students from previous years. At the end of Year 2, we recommended that (1) formal evaluation and follow-up procedures be developed for each school and (2) assessment and evaluation procedures reflect the goals and objectives of the individual classroom teacher and each participating school.

Questions 7.a. and 7.b. of the interview asked the participants (1) whether or not this had been done; and (2) to provide their impressions of the current performance of previous R/WI students.

7.a. Have you been able to obtain any feedback on Year 1 students? If so, what is your impression of their performance?

Four of the six participants said that they were able to obtain feedback about Year 1 students.

School #1. Both participants noted that there was some information available about Year 1 students. Student transience was cited as the reason behind the lack of information concerning student progress.

Both participants noted the following about the three of the Year 1 students:

- One student has low cognitive functioning and as a result is not making good progress. He has been in an R/WI group for all three years.
- A second is working at the level of the class she is in. As one goal of R/WI is to bring students to the classroom average, this seems to be a success story.
- The third student is doing very well.

One of the participants had information about a fourth student who transferred to another school. She noted that teachers at that school can't believe the progress the student made in the program. She said, "They are quite ecstatic about him."

School #2. One participant stated she had no information about Year 1 students and had no impressions about their current performance.

The other participant spoke of one student whom she knew was now doing very well. She indicated he went from being a non-reader at Christmas time to now being at grade level (i.e., Grade 3).

School #3. One participant indicated that she didn't have any data or information about Year 1 students. She also had no impressions about the current performance of Year 1 students.

The other participant noted that she had information about the only Year 1 student still in the school. She stated, "He's doing very, very nicely. But, there's no research to tell, because there's no baseline, whether he would have done just fine without R/WI or not."

7.b. Do you feel that the students in Year 2 benefited from the Project? What are the bases for your impressions?

All the participants felt that the Year 2 students had benefited from their involvement in the R/WI Project.

School #1. One participant said, "Yes, and basically I'm basing that on feedback from staff in the school. They can see the improvements and gains they have made in comparison, to perhaps, even other children in the same family or children who have not been through the program."

The other participant felt that students had benefited substantially, but she didn't have concrete data to support this. However, she noted that one student had moved from the school and two others were now in a special class.

School #2. At this site both participants felt they had good information about the students. Both also felt that the students had made good gains.

One participant noted that one student had just recently really taken off in reading.

School #3. One participant said, "Yes, absolutely!" This participant also noted that she thought the Project had provided her partner with many new skills and as a result her students were benefiting.

The other participant spoke of only one child. This child is still in her classroom and she felt that the child was making good progress. However, she wasn't sure that the R/WI Project was the reason for this.

Summary. - Very little was known about Year 1 students. One reason for this might have been a high level of student transience. Two participants had no information and two others had information about only one student. The participants who had knowledge of student performance reported that most appeared to be doing very well.

The participants had more knowledge about Year 2 students. They reported that the majority of these students were doing well or keeping up with their present classmates. Many comments showed the participants were enthusiastic about the progress their students had made. The data supported the conclusion that the participants believed that the student outcome goals for the Project were being met.

On a negative note, it seemed evident that formal evaluation and follow-up procedures had not been implemented for either year of Project operation or, if they had, the information was not given to the teachers. Even though four of the participants stated they were able to obtain information about students, their comments indicated it was informal and subjective in nature. One of the participants noted that because of the lack of baseline data she could not be sure student growth was related to the R/WI program.

School Conditions Needing Change or Improvement.

At the end of each year, Project participants have been asked about conditions that needed to be improved or changed. The reasons for collecting that data seemed self-evident. One of the basic tenets of the Project was that teachers and those in charge of our schools have the capacity to improve their own pedagogical understandings and skills, and thereby improve school conditions.

In the two previous years, the following recommendations were made (1) purchasing of materials should be made easier for the schools; (2) funds should be earmarked for adding to and replacing existing language arts materials in all classrooms; (3) professional development efforts should continue and be based on the recommendations of the Project participants; (4) a date should be established for the submission of an annual plan for the extension of the Project; and (5) teachers should be free to opt in or out of the Project.

In Year 3, question 9 attempted to establish what school conditions the participants thought were still in need of change at the end of Year 3.

9. This Project was based on the belief that schools and teachers have the capacity to improve themselves if conditions are right. To sustain improvement in the schools and teachers involved in this Project, what conditions in your school do you think need to be changed or improved?

School #1. Both teachers at this site stressed the need for additional personnel. They felt the staff was spread too thin.

One participant said, "Well, for one thing, you have to stop cutting teachers. I mean, if you're giving classroom teachers less and less support, and more and more special education kids every year. I had up to five in my room this year. You can't expect people to carry on the R/WI Program with small groups, when they have no one else in the room. The kids are not independent enough to handle you being away that long. So you've got to have funding. We've got to have physical bodies. It's absolutely important."

The other participant stated, "We need more personnel so that we can free up teachers to either teach small groups or observer other teachers or go to in-services."

School #2. One participant said, "I feel that we need a staff person to support this program. I know the original goal of it was that there shouldn't be any staff hired. To me that's a really ridiculous, ridiculous position. I mean, how can you run a program without any staff." Later she stated, "There are other circumstances, there's not enough materials. There should be more in-service days. There needs to be substitute time for the teachers so they can visit other classrooms. We need a computer and to give teachers a chance to become more comfortable using. We really need more staff."

The second participant stated, "I think what would be very, very helpful is having a professional library that is very accessible. There is a vast amount of educational readings that are available, but it is very nice if someone has gone through and sifted through them, and shares with the ones that are most valuable." Later she said, "I think teachers have a lot

to offer and if we could go see what's happening in their classrooms and share more ideas we would all benefit greatly."

School #3. At this site, one participant noted, "Teachers need to be empowered, but truly empowered. The principals really need to believe that the teachers are capable of doing things, to support them while they fly. It can't be false empowerment." Later she stated, "Teachers need to be stroked. This year, people are really getting thanked for what they are doing. There's a lot more of that going on and that's really neat."

The other participant said, "I'm not sure it's a question of changing or improving, rather than continuing or being consistent. What I don't want to see happen is that after the last year of the Project it gets forgotten. I'm hoping it will carry on. I learned a lot from the Project and I think that the only way that others are going to learn about it is through sharing. That's one thing we pondered this year, it's really tough, like how do you share R/WI with the rest of the school. We've tried a few techniques, and it hasn't worked. What do you do? I just don't know. But, I hope it will continue rather than just dropping it."

Summary. - When considering conditions that needed to be improved or changed, most of the participants noted that there was a need for more time to share ideas and instructional strategies, and for classroom visitations.

Additionally, half of the participants stated that there was a need for additional staff. They felt that the Project was very difficult to carry out given the lack of sufficient support staff in their schools, however, they had differing opinions as to what the additional staff would do. Some of the ideas concerning additional staff were (a) to take over the class while the teacher ran small groups; (b) to do classroom observations; and, (c) to free R/WI teachers so that they can attend and conduct inservices.

Other ideas concerning improvement and change were related to the need (a) for more involvement and stronger support from school administrators; (b) to earmark school funds for adding to or replacing instructional materials; (c) for an accessible professional library; and (d) to continue to foster and provide for professional development.

In response to other questions, a number of the participants indicated a need to ensure that participation in the Project be on a voluntary basis. Once again, some dissatisfaction was expressed about the fact that some of them felt that they had not been given a choice as to whether or not they wanted to participate in the Project.

Final Opinions About The Reading/Writing Immersion Project.

Given that this was the final year of the Project, it was felt that information was needed regarding the participants overall view of the R/WI Project. Therefore, questions 10.a. through 10.g. were asked of all six participants. The purpose of these questions was to establish:

- if and how the Project had helped the participants clarify their own ideas about how to improve their classrooms or schools;
- what new skills, if any, that the Project provided to them;
- the positive features, if any, of the Project;
- the negative features, if any, of the Project;
- what changes, if any, should be made to the Project;
- would they have taken part in the Project if they knew what they know now; and,
- would they recommend the Project to other schools and/or school divisions.

10. This was the final year of the R/WI Project. For the next series of questions, we ask that you keep in mind the entire three years. That is, for this series of questions we are asking you to provide us with your final assessment of the R/WI Project.

10.a. Has the Project helped you to clarify your own ideas about how to improve your classroom or school instruction? If yes, please describe how. If no, please discuss why you think this didn't occur.

School #1. At this site, both participants stated that the Project helped them to clarify their ideas.

One participant stated, "It's made me look at children's learning behaviours a lot differently, and as a result of that, my instruction has changed." She went on to note that her assessment skills had really improved. This participant ended by saying, "There's still a lot of unanswered questions I don't know about, and I'm only going to get the answers from the kids. But, the Project has given me another avenue to pursue this with."

The second participant said, "I would say yes. I would say that the time we spent as a group and the support we got from each other was really important." This participant felt that the most important thing that she got from the Project was that she really became empowered as a result of it. She also felt that the Project taught her that she had to find out answers and goals of her own, even though in the beginning she was disappointed and wanted to be spoon fed. She stated, "It really

provided me with a strong incentive, that when I saw things changing in the kids, it was coming from me and this was empowering me." She concluded by saying, "I felt a tremendous amount of growth and every time I took a university course or something, I always tied R/WI into it. So it would clarify things for me even to a greater extent."

School #2. One participant said, "I think it was a good Project, and it was very helpful, especially the first two years. I wouldn't say it has helped me this year at all really, other than the materials that I received. It helped me to see children are learners. It helped me to take my cues from kids, and teach according to the need." Later she stated, "I learned a lot of the nitty gritty that perhaps I should have known when I first came into teaching. But, honestly I didn't know it so, I kind of got my good education through R/WI, and I was lucky to get that."

The second participant noted, "It helped to a certain degree by sharing ideas. It frustrated a lot by being very obtuse, leaderless, and sort-of playing games a lot with us. The University personnel treated us a lot like students rather than peers. I'm sure my partner would answer the question differently. She's a beginning teacher and although the Project did make us all very, very cynical and what not, so maybe that's what it taught us. To look carefully at things, to not buy what the so-called experts always tell us, but to look carefully at what we think is best for our kids."

School #3. Both participants noted that the Project had helped them to clarify their ideas about instruction and assessment.

One participant responded, "It provided me with a new bag-full of strategies. It helped me to be quicker in evaluating students and assessing needs and keeping good track of student progress."

The other participant said, "I had some pretty definite ideas, I guess the Project helped me to clarify those. It has also helped me to develop a few of my skills. Given me a lot of practice in certain areas. It has also taken a lot of my time." Later she stated, "So, the Project has helped me to see that there needs to be some more support."

10.b. Has this Project provided you with new skills that you did not have? If yes, what are those skills?

School #1. Both participants at this school stated that the Project provided them with new skills. However, each noted different skills they had developed.

One participant said, "Oh, many, many, many new skills. New skills in organization. New skills, I keep on saying assessment because that's just something that's been really big this year for me. New skills in the area of working with peers."

The other participant responded, "Well, I would say it again, it's the inquiry skills. It's the seeking information, sharing responsibility, and the decision making. The work we did clarified concepts and theories

that I had. So, that you could combine the practice and theory, and integrate them. So, it was neat."

School #2. One participant said, "Well, I learned a lot about the history of Reading Recovery in New Zealand and some of their ideas about what they thought would be good for kids. A lot of stuff about early intervention sorts or theories and what not. I was given the time to do a lot of reading the first year, so that helped. That's made me look more into research and journals. So that would be a plus."

The second participant stated, "I learned some really good ways of evaluating. Evaluating is always a real toughie for me. I'm not quite sure at this point what things I should be evaluating. I'm getting better at that and I think R/WI has helped me there. It has helped me in terms of giving me a lot of sound whole-language activities." She went to enumerate a few of the activities she learned through the Project. Later, she stated, "One of the things that was stressed a lot in the first year, that was really good for me to know, was that kids bring a lot of knowledge with them. They know a lot and most of them do, in a sense, know how to read."

School #3. One participant noted, "No, I think what they basically did was hone my skills."

The second participant responded, "How to evaluate student reading. A lot of time to try procedures to see if their suitable. I have also been able to hone my skills in lot of areas, it's been a big help."

10.c. What, if any, were the positive features of the R/WI Project?

School #1. One respondent noted, "I guess the biggest thing for me was a chance to develop things as a group, come back to my classroom and try them, and go back to the group to reflect on what happened in the classroom. It was a real good learning model for me. That was the big influence."

The other participant said, "I think it was the opportunity to meet as a support group. I guess that's really important to me, and I see that more and more, man is not an island. You can't be by yourself. You can be the greatest teacher around, but if you can't share what you're doing, how can you grow?" She later indicated the empowerment and reinforcement that came from the R/WI group were the most important features.

School #2. One participant said, "One of the most positive features was to see my partner grow as a teacher, and just seeing her being guided and aided through money, time-off, a second teacher, help, and just seeing her grow. I mean she's got really negative feelings about this Project, as we all do in one way or another, but she has grown as a teacher. Either with the help of the Project, or in spite of it, it's been nice to see that. This group has never jelled as a group from the beginning. It was a whole bunch of individuals sitting down who never got together."

The other participant noted the following: (i) getting together with other teachers; (ii) having the chance to brainstorm about problems and come up with solutions; (iii) having time to share strategies with each other; (iv) visiting other teachers' classrooms; (v) having access to really great professional materials; and (vi) having the opportunity to search for children's books. She ended by stating, "We helped each other an awful lot!"

School #3. One participant responded, "The positive features was the development on my partner's part. Many, many skills. Much theoretical knowledge. And, the chance to do small group work with kids. Seeing one classroom being fairly well equipped. The other classrooms are not so well equipped. A lot of stuff gets destroyed or lost in inner-city, so the money needs to be continually supplied." She went on to state, "The time to do small group work was an essential component. To me this was what it was all about." Finally, she noted, "That to have the data about students and to have a good idea about what to do with the students was helpful."

The other participant said, "I think some of the positive features were the reading materials, the discussions, visiting the classrooms, and basically, the whole collaboration idea."

10.d. What, if any, were the negative features of the R/WI Project?

School #1. Both participants noted that due to the number of teachers and schools involved, all participants weren't on the same conceptual level. They thought this caused some of the group meetings to be difficult. However, both participants felt that this problem was eventually overcome.

One participant felt that at group meetings the participants often spent too much time talking about "cute" things that had happened in their class. She thought they needed to be more concerned with the problems they were encountering and how to overcome these.

Both participants felt that all other aspects of the Project were positive.

School #2. At this site, both participants had negative impressions of the University personnel.

Concerning the University personnel, one participant stated, "The feeling that they gave us was that they were doing us a favor. They were better than us, smarter than us, knew more than us. Played with us a lot, instead of just saying this is what we're doing, they played with us a lot. They manipulated us. They were very arrogant, extremely arrogant. Good guys, nice guys, but very, very arrogant. And you know, we told them that." With regard to other negative features, this participant said, "There was the negative that the group never jelled. It never became a real project."

The other participant noted, "The double-speak of the professors at the U of M. You know, the talk of respect, and I felt a distinct lack of

respect for our positions. Just simple lack of respect for what we did, when we talked about some of the very mundane problems we had. Often we were sent back the message, in subtle ways, that we were whining and we were just being petty and silly. But, these were very important issues to us. I think that we deserved to have those issues respected. Particularly by people who are no longer in the classroom. I think that attitude definitely got worse. In my opinion, it got really bad especially this year. Condescension came from all parties from the University." Concerning other negative features, she stated, (i) "The amount of paper work required by the University and the Division." and (ii) "The lack of organization was definitely a big problem."

School #3. At this site one participant stated, "I don't think the group ever came together as a group. A lot of people had their own agenda and were not interested in working cooperatively."

The other participant made the following comments:

- "The Winnipeg School Division researcher didn't have any knowledge about the Project and didn't correctly portray what was being done at our school."
- "Everybody is fighting over the Division's student outcome report and this is divisive."
- "Pitting school against school for resources. It was supposed to be teamwork and collaboration. We feel that other schools have received more than their fair share of the resources because we were not aware of how to get them."
- "We were not given information about how much money we had to spend, what we could spend it on, and a clear balance sheet of what we had spent. This was the Division's accounting procedures. It was very negative that we should feel that other schools got more than we did or that they feel we got more than them."
- "The fact that we had to make a proposal to use up money that was part of the original Project, was just nonsense."

10.e. What changes, if any, would you have made in order to improve the Project?

School #1. One participant noted, "I would like to have seen, in Year 3, more meeting time to do additional group studies. To examine the research from other similar projects. Umm, but other than that, I wouldn't make any other changes. I feel it was a real good Project, and I was glad to have been the one chosen to be a part of it because I really learned a lot from it."

The other participant stated, "I always wondered what the role of the Inner City Initiative person was. Was that person a participant, a facilitator or a coordinator? I also wondered why, toward the end, to a certain extent, things started to become more controlled?" This

participant later replied, "I would have preferred if the Project had just been in our school, and that you collaborated and consulted with other teachers in your school, as opposed to three schools, involved. The University should still be involved, and I still believe that you should have days set up that you meet on."

School #2. One participant said, "I would have done a little bit more direct teaching in the staff development part of it. Or, had said at the beginning, this is for you to learn and get better at yourselves. We really didn't understand what a staff development or a teacher decision maker project was at the beginning."

The other participant indicated, "I would start off with far better organization and goal setting, and I think we would have wasted a lot less time. R/WI was not our idea. We were, you know, asked or told to be part of this Project by our principals. And, even though we were happy to be a part of it, and it gave us a lot of great things, I think it's really difficult to take a bunch of people who have not heard of this Project and expect them to come up with the Project goals. In effect, we were asked to develop the Project. If we had got better guidance at the beginning, I think we would have been able to make better decisions along the way than we felt we made."

School #3. One participant felt that the only improvement that was needed was that, "... all information should have been given out to all groups involved equally, at the same time, and to the same degree."

The other participant thought four improvements or changes were needed. First, she stated, "I would ask for the staff to support it." Second, she noted, "I would ask for properly equipped classrooms. Any person who comes into the R/WI Project should have adequate supplies, with a long tedious, time consuming process to go through to get some money from the Division." Third, she said, "I would build in a component for the University contact person, X to talk about his vision to the expansion teachers." Fourth, she indicated, "I would build in time for the expansion teachers to some knowledge. They need the in-service training just as much as the original Project teachers did. How can they do what these teachers did, if they are not given what they were given? We can't just say try this. They will look, and say why?"

10.f. Knowing what you know now, would you still have volunteered to take part in the R/WI Project? Please explain your response.

School #1. The participants at this school both provided positive responses. Each made additional comments.

One participant said, "Yes, because the learning experience was the big part of the Project. You were able to take what you could, throw out what you didn't want, and the Project empowered the teacher. Rather than having your administrators force you to do something. The Project forced you to really look at your kids and make some decisions and I think that's the big thing when you teaching anything. You have to look

at where the kids are at, make decisions, instruct, and then continue to make decisions based on your previous instruction. I never did that before, and so as a result of this Project I am able to do that now on my own. I think I now make better instructional decisions for each of the kids in my classroom."

The other participant stated, "Yes, I would. Absolutely! I've said this many times, this was an opportunity to gain a level of professional development that we can't usually get in the context of a school year. In the R/WI Project I felt like I was working on my professional development on a daily basis and even on a one-to-one basis. The meshing and integrating of all kind of concepts was really important to me. I really liked the consultation, collaboration, and decision making aspects of it. These things really empowered the teachers and the students too. You were always growing. And I, I would absolutely go through this kind of project again."

School #2. At this site one participant said yes and no, and the other provided an emphatic no. The following are their comments.

One participant at this site said, "I don't know how to answer that. I would like to take part in Year 1. Year 1 was great. It was a really, really exciting time to be working with kids and I felt I learned a tremendous amount. In the last couple of years, especially this year, no, I wouldn't have wanted to be part of it. So, I guess my answer is yes and no."

The other participant indicated no before the question was even completed. When asked to elaborate on why, she noted, "I think it was poorly run. The Division didn't like the people from the University, and neither did the people from the University think the Division was doing right. I don't think all the principals were on board. It was, I think, a political thing for the school division, a money thing for the teachers, and a publishing thing for the guys at the University."

School #3. At this school both participants stated that they would participate again. The participants' comments follow.

One participant stated, "Yes, because I think I learned a lot from it. It was a very valuable experience."

The other participant responded, "I never volunteered, but yes I would want to be involved again. I think it's great! I wish it could somehow be throughout the whole school. I think it's a good model for resource, but it has to be voluntary on the part of the classroom teacher. It's been very helpful for me to be involved in this way in several people's classrooms. If it were possible to do it in everybody's classroom, with a reasonable workload, I think it would be a really good way to go."

10.g. Would you recommend a project similar to R/WI to other schools and/or school divisions? Please explain your response.

Five of the six participants replied yes. The other participant said no, but conditionally recommended the program.

School #1. At this site both participants stated that they would. One participant added the following explanation, "Yes I would. The way we operate it in our school is very effective and very child oriented. I think that often the children we work with in this school need that adult attention. It does them a world of good."

The other participant added, "It depends on the school or school division. If they didn't have a whole bunch of little at-risk kids, I wouldn't, because this isn't an efficient use of a teacher's time if she can teach to the whole group. Which teachers have been doing for trillions of years, and getting kids to be good readers without this sort of intensive work. For other schools in the same boat as us, where intensive work will make a big difference, yes I would recommend it."

School #2. In response to this question, one participant stated yes. She qualified her response by adding, "I think the idea behind R/WI, and the intent, these are very good things. It needs to be better defined so that it can be presented to other schools and other teachers in a better way than it has been. There needs to be more funding to go along with it. You can't take a project that is this important and this big, and thrust it upon people who have no supports. So, if there's a lot of support, and if it's better defined, yes, I would recommend it."

The other participant indicated that she wouldn't recommend the Project to others unless, "... it was streamlined in a way that made sure the people worked together, that the principals took part, and maybe, train the teachers at a local level. Like a whole staff rather than portions of staffs from many schools, just do one, one whole staff or something like that."

School #3. Both participants indicated they would recommend the Project to other schools or school divisions. Regarding why they would do this, one stated, "Because it's a true life professional development program. There was actually reading and writing across the curriculum. You grow with your children."

The other participant noted that the structure of the Project might have to be altered a little for other schools. She also said, "A plus was teachers getting together, talking about what's happening in their classrooms, and then trying new things. I would build that into the projects in other schools. I think that was a very important part of the R/WI Project."

Summary. - All six of the participants stated that the Project helped to clarify their ideas and/or improve their classroom teaching, but each noted they were affected in different ways. Some of the participants commented that the sharing among the participants gave them new techniques or skills (e.g., assessment skills, empowered, see children as learners, etc.). For others it helped them to hone skills they already had. One participant felt that as a result of the Project she shared ideas with professional colleagues and this had helped her, but she was unhappy with the University personnel.

All six of the participants stated they had received some benefits from the R/WI Project. Four of them indicated they had learn a number of new skills and two others stated that they had honed existing skills. Specifically, skill areas developed or honed included (a) student assessment skills; (b) inquiry skills; (c) information about early intervention; (d) the ways children learn and what they bring to the learning situation; and, (e) clarification of concepts and theories, and how to translate them into practice.

All listed positive features of the Project. Some of these were (a) the opportunity to meet with other teachers and share ideas; (2) to observe in each other's classrooms; (3) to reflect on what activities worked and didn't work; (4) to share materials; (5) seeing growth in their partners' teaching skills; and (6) the opportunity to examine, discuss and obtain new materials (e.g., children's books). Additionally, the empowerment that was an outgrowth of the Project was mentioned by a few. This feature was also noted as a major strength by the participants in the Year 2 interviews.

Several negative aspects of the Project were mentioned. The one mentioned most often was the conflict perceived to be caused by differences at each school and in individual concept levels. While two of the four individuals felt that these problems had been overcome, two others felt that the conflict had never been resolved. This conflict may be the reason the participants from the three schools only had one meeting in Year 3 of the Project. Other negative aspects were (a) at one site both participants felt their interaction with University personnel had been negative and noted they had not been treated appropriately; (b) at various

sites, problems related to the student outcome evaluation and report were mentioned, and (c) some participants noted problems regarding the Division's handling of the grant moneys. In the Year 2 Report, difficulties associated with the Division's handling of the grant moneys and the competition among school sites were also mentioned as problem areas.

When asked how they would improve the Project all six of the participants suggested different things. The suggestions given included (a) more time for meetings in Year 3; (b) clarification of the role of the Student Support Branch and Branch personnel; (c) more support from other school staff; (d) more direct teaching of skills by the University personnel in Year 1 of the Project; (e) better organization and goal setting by University personnel; (f) equal sharing of information among schools and participants; (g) less paper work to access moneys; (h) time built in for expansion teachers to attend inservices; and (i) properly equipped classrooms.

Four of the participants stated that they had learned a lot from the R/WI Project and would volunteer to take part in it again. One participant liked Year 1 because she learned a lot from the Project that year and stated she would volunteer for Year 1 again. However, she did not enjoy, or get much out of the Project in Years 2 and 3 and would not volunteer for those two years again. One participant stated that the Project was poorly run and would not have elected to take part knowing what she knows now.

Consistent with their responses to whether they would take part again five of the participants stated that they would recommend the Project to other schools and/or school divisions. The sixth said she would recommend the Project only if it were streamlined in a way that ensured people would work together, the principals supported the Project, and the whole staff was trained at the local, school level.

Continuation of the Project.

Two of the major goals of the R/WI Project were the development of (a) sound philosophies about and instructional practices for the teaching of literacy skills, and (b) the empowerment of teachers as decision-makers. If these goals were achieved and student performance improved, it was hoped that when the Project ended, the ideas and skills transmitted would continue to have an impact in the participating schools. Question 11 attempted to collect data about whether or not the schools planned to continue the Project, and to acquire information about their choices.

11. Does your school have plans to continue the R/WI Project next year? If "no", why not? If "yes", what are your plans?

School #1. One participant replied, "I really don't know. I don't know. That hasn't really been discussed. If the two people who been involved in the Project for three years don't carry it on it won't be carried on. I don't think it's going to go. No, because there's nobody else that knows it."

The other participant stated, "If the two of us don't carry it on it'll die. The program is the people right now. The program is very heavily involved with the people, and I would think that if the people left the school, the program would, would not exist. So, I mean the principal wouldn't carry it on, I don't think my partner would carry it on by herself. She'll do all kinds of activities from the program, that's just called good teaching, not R/WI." This participant went on to add, "Yeah, it hasn't been the most vibrant program at this school. But in X's room it has been. It's just not a school wide thing, at this particular school. At other schools it is. You know in the other schools it spread. But, we have been working together, X and I. That's always been an incredibly positive thing. A lot of fun. Despite all the other stuff."

School #2. One participant said, "You know what, I don't know. I really don't know. There will always be an emphasis on reading and writing in our school and I think that's a direct result of the R/WI Project. We have a proposal that's almost identical to the Reading/Writing Immersion Project."

The other respondent noted, "I'm not quite sure yet, we just haven't had the chance to sit down and make decisions for next year. I'm not quite sure at this time."

School #3. At this site one participant stated, "We have an action plan written out. The principal wants it. If we weren't going to get money for it, I don't know what the situation would be. Since there is going to be money to

> support it, we are definitely going to do it again next year." She later added, "I think our plan is going to be very similar to the original ideas. A strong in-service component, meetings and visitations within the school. Those would be the strong things."
>
> The other participant replied, "Yes. We're still meeting. We're planning on doing it in the Fall using a similar system to what we did this year."

Summary. - At the time of the interviews, only one of the three schools stated that there was a firm commitment to continue the Project, in a similar form, next year. At this site the participants felt it would be continued because the principal wanted it to and there was Division funding available.

At a second site the participants weren't as certain about the continuation of the Project, but noted there were similar plans being made for next year. One noted that this would be the case because the school would always place emphasis on reading and writing.

At a third site it seemed quite clear that the Project will not be continued. Here the participants felt there wasn't enough interest in the Project at their school.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

An examination of the interview data from Years 1, 2 and 3 led to the following conclusions and recommendations.

On the basis of the results of the teacher interviews, it was concluded that though there were some minor problems in the Project, overall *it was a success*. The comments from the participating teachers were generally, very positive. *The goals and objectives of the Project have been met.*

Recommendations.

1. **On the basis of the results of the teacher interviews, the Winnipeg School Division No.1 should encourage and support the continuation of the R/WI Project within the three original schools.**

2. **Given the teachers' perceptions concerning the success of the R/WI Project in the three original schools, the Winnipeg School Division No.1 and Student Support Branch of Manitoba Education**

and Training should encourage and support its expansion into additional schools.

Meetings.

For the first two years of the Project, group meetings were *overwhelmingly viewed as valuable, worthwhile and/or helpful.* Strategy sharing was an activity that was seen as being of particular value and is mentioned in response to several interview questions. The participants also felt *responsible for their own destiny and welcomed this responsibility.*

In Year 2 some concerns about meetings were being voiced. In Year 3 the concerns escalated to point that only one meeting was held. Most of the complaints were related to problems: (1) establishing meeting agendas; (2) staying on task; and, (3) caused by competitiveness and distrust amongst the schools. Competition and distrust amongst the schools appear to have resulted from perceptions that resources and funds were not being equitably shared, and that some schools were more privy to information than others.

Finally, personnel changes that occurred in Year 2 at two of the Project schools resulted in problems of Project continuity. Both new and continuing group members reported dissatisfaction with the orientation given to the new group members. Some of the original participants reported that they had difficulties dealing with the competing philosophies and different knowledge bases of the new members.

Recommendations.

3. **Participant meetings were an important aspect of the Project and should be continued. We recommend that future meetings include one or two staff members chosen from all the teachers (i.e., original Project participants and extension teachers) involved in the Project at each school. One purpose of these meetings should be to network for sharing and support.**

4. **There should be a person elected to chair the group meetings. This person would be responsible for facilitating the establishment of meeting dates, the development of agendas, and the setting of tentative goals and objectives for the meetings.**

5. **Staff replacements should be provided with a comprehensive overview of Project philosophies and goals.**

6. **New administrators should also be provided with a comprehensive overview of Project philosophies and goals.**

7. **For a functional group to be maintained, the Division must develop procedures that provide equitable funds and resources to each school. Project schools should not be placed in the position of competing for funds and resources. At all costs, the appearance of equity must be maintained.**

Professional Skills.

On the basis of the teacher interviews, it can be concluded that *the "teacher-as-decision-maker" goal of the Project has become a reality. Growth in self-confidence, professional skills and the tolerance of individual differences are all evident.* This growth represents the *development of the skills necessary to making effective instructional change.*

Recommendation.

8. **The participants should continue to be given responsibility for determining their future professional development needs.**

9. **In determining these needs, the participants should continue to use the "teacher-as-decision-maker" approach.**

10. **There were some indications that the pressure of beginning a new school year caused some participants to postpone making professional development plans until late in the year. Professional development plans for the next year should be made at the close of the current school year.**

University Personnel.

In Years 1 and 2 there were a number of contradictory suggestions regarding University involvement, but all participants felt that there was a positive relationship. The participants stated that they felt *comfortable interacting with the University personnel*, and *did not feel threatened by their presence in either the meetings or their classrooms.* However, in Year 3, two participants felt that the relationship had deteriorated to the point that they stopped contacting University personnel.

In Years 2 and 3 a majority of the participants noted that they *wanted University personnel to become more involved at the classroom level.* Even one of the participants who was unhappy with the University personnel wanted more involvement. Most participants

stated that they valued the inservices and classroom support provided by University personnel. We believe that these feelings stem from the fact that the University personnel have served as individual sounding boards for the teachers rather than as authorities having control or power over them and their programs. In personal conversations, two participants stated that the presence of the University personnel helped them to feel they could risk trying new ideas and strategies. They indicated they felt this way because the support that was provided was confidential and non-evaluative.

Finally, in Year 2 half of the teachers noted that the University personnel should have been regular participants in the group meetings. However, even when discussing group meeting attendance, the participants stated that they felt *it was more important that University personnel visit their classrooms.*

Recommendations.

11. **If the Project continues, money should be allotted to provide for continued professional development. The participants should continue to (a) have primary responsibility for determining professional development needs and (b) be involved in the selection of resource personnel.**

12. **Efforts should continue to be made to maintain an environment in which teachers feel able to take risks, try new strategies, discuss new ideas, and challenge old ideas and practices.**

13. **Classroom visitations, by an individual(s) selected by the participants, should be considered. Throughout the Project, the participating teachers noted that they felt a need for a non-threatening resource person to (a) act as a "sound board", (b) provide objective classroom observations, and (c) demonstrate or model new techniques.**

Student Support Branch and Principal Support.

Throughout the Project a *high level of satisfaction was expressed for the support provided by the Student Support Branch*, however, there was some confusion about the exact roles the Branch and Branch personnel played.

In Years 1, 2 and 3, most participants noted that they had received some support from school administrators. However, all three surveys indicated that the majority of the participants

desired more active support from the school administrators. Specifically, participants stated that they would like principals to be more visible, provide more in-school support, take a more active role in extending the Project, and take the time to discuss the program with them.

Recommendations.

14. **In future projects the role of outside agencies and agency personnel should be more clearly defined.**

15. **At the initial staff meeting for the year, school administrators should discuss with all staff the goals, objectives and implementation plans for the coming year.**

16. **School administrators should devote more time actively promoting the extension of the Project.**

17. **School administrators should be more involved in the R/WI meetings and discussions held in their schools.**

Classroom Teacher - Resource Teacher Relationships.

In Years 1, 2 and 3 there was *overwhelming support for the collaborative aspect of the Project.* The participants felt that collaboration *helped to produce the outcomes they desired* and *provided them with a partner they could trust.* However, the collaborative relationships established at each school were quite different.

The only negative responses were directed at the perceived lack of time available for consultation and collaboration with their partner. The participants noted that collaboration was essential, but that if they had had more time they could have been more effective.

In the authors' opinions, the *data supported the idea that the more active the participants are in making school level decisions, the better the odds are for continued action and support after the Project initiators leave the scene.*

During the last two years of the Project, participant responses to interview questions emphasized the value of collaboration. They noted that collaboration with their partners and with staff from other Project schools had been extremely useful and should continue. We found this odd in that in their responses to other questions, some of the same participants indicated that competition developed amongst the schools and that they had difficulty dealing

with differences of opinion. In fact, these problems are what seemed to have led to the demise of the group meetings. The interview data seemed to indicate that when sharing ideas, strategies and techniques the group meetings went well and were perceived as very useful. However, when the task was other than sharing (e.g., acquiring funds and resources or making decisions that were binding for all schools), there were negative perceptions about group meetings.

Recommendations.

18. **The partnership between the classroom and resource teacher was established to provide each school with well-trained individuals who would support the expansion of the Project. The partnership should continue with the inclusion of the expansion teachers.**

19. **The resource teacher should spend more time expanding the Project to other classrooms and less time working in the original R/WI classroom.**

20. **The participants (i.e., original and expansion participants) should be provided with more time for collaboration.**

R/WI Classroom Activities.

All sites indicated that they were providing R/WI activities for the *whole class* and a *select group of students*. A *wide variety of language arts activities* were being used. Writing as a process, shared reading strategies, and some form of oral reading analysis were mentioned by a majority of the participants. *The activities that were used for the whole class were often modified for use with selected R/WI students.* A number of participants noted that this year's activities differed from last year's only because of differences in student needs.

Though *none of the schools used identical student selection criteria*, there were many similarities. Group size varied from two to six students, and some students were involved in more than one cycle. *The most common explanation for changes in group membership was student mastery of objectives.* At some sites, student mobility created grouping difficulty.

Findings related to R/WI classroom activities in Year 3 were similar to those of the previous years.

Recommendations.

21. **Continue the use of R/WI procedures with the whole class as well as with select groups of students.**

22. **R/WI procedures should continue to be modified and adapted to meet the needs of individual students and the classroom context in which the students reside.**

23. **R/WI assessment procedures should continue to be modified and adjusted to reflect the goals and objectives of the individual classroom teacher and each participating school.**

24. **For students transferring to other schools, information concerning their participation and achievements in reading and writing should be (a) mailed to the receiving schools and (b) given to the parents or guardians.**

R/WI Expansion Activities.

There were four major findings reported in this section of the report. First, unlike in Year 2, when all the participants were involved in expansion activities, during Year 3 only four of the six *Project participants indicated they were involved in expanding R/WI to additional classrooms.* Expansion activities were continuing or accelerating in pace at two schools. At these two sites, one can conclude that the participants were very active in meeting this Project goal. At the third school, expansion of the Project was not occurring. At this site, comments made by the participants indicated that the expansion process has come to a halt due to (a) general apathy concerning the program; (b) a lack of time for participants to be involved in Project expansion; and (3) the failure to give the program the necessary priority.

Second, *in Year 3 very little direct service was provided for students or teachers in expansion classrooms.* This was a change from Year 2, when most of the participants reported that they were instructing students in expansion classrooms. This year the support activities reported most often were (1) sharing materials, (2) providing inservices, and (3) discussing instructional ideas with teachers in the expansion classrooms. These activities corresponded more closely to the goals of the Project.

Third, *there were mixed reactions as to whether or not the participants felt they had been given adequate time to consult and/or collaborate with the expansion teachers.* This was a change from Year 2, when the majority felt that they had been given adequate time. At the site where the participants indicated the fewest expansion activities had taken place, the lack of time was perceived as one of the major reasons why such activities had not occurred.

Finally, as was the case in Year 2, participants commented that *consultation, collaboration and other cooperative activities were what worked best.* As indicated in a previous section, the authors believe the consultative, collaborative and other cooperative activities mentioned were those held amongst group members and school partners. However, two of the four participants also commented that certain aspects of their consultation, collaboration and cooperation with extension teachers were "what didn't work." They gave the following reasons for this failure: (1) some teachers wanted problem students removed from the classroom to be taught by others; and (2) other teachers either did not understand the consultative-collaborative approach and how to work within it, or felt uncomfortable with the process.

Recommendations.

25. **The expansion of the R/WI Project to other classrooms must be on a voluntary basis if the "teacher-as-decision-maker" is to remain a primary goal. The data suggested that the ability of the teachers to make critical decisions is one of the major components in improving student performance.**

26. **The philosophies, goals, objectives and procedures of the R/WI Project should continue to be expanded to other classrooms.**

27. **The Project participants should be provided with additional time for consultation and collaboration. New participants need this time in order to become more familiar with Project philosophies, goals, and procedures.**

28. **Participants stated that consultation, collaboration and other cooperative activities were "what worked" best within their group, but they also commented that certain aspects of their consultation, collaboration and cooperation with extension teachers were "what didn't work." It appears that this problem stems from the fact that the Project did not anticipate the need to teach participants how to consult and collaborate with teachers**

outside the original group. Therefore, a training component for the development of these skills should be considered.

29. **The trend toward the provision of more indirect services to expansion teachers should continue. These types of service produce professionals who are more independent, competent, and responsible.**

30. **Administrative support, at the division and school levels, for the expansion of the Project must be obvious and strong. Without such support, those responsible for carrying out expansion activities are not likely to risk making change.**

Student Progress.

The data seemed to indicate that *formal evaluation and follow-up procedures had not been implemented or, if they had, the information was not given to the teachers.* Even though half the participants stated they *were able to obtain some information about the performance of former students, their comments indicated it was informal and subjective in nature.* This failure has resulted in a variety of assessment, evaluation, and morale problems.

Many R/WI students moved out of the Project schools. This seems to be *an annual problem that hindered the assessment of student learning.*

Most of the *responses portrayed the Year 1 and 2 R/WI students as doing well or keeping up with their present classes.* Many comments showed the participants to be *enthusiastic about the progress* most of their previous students had made.

All of the teachers thought their Year 1 and Year 2 students had benefited from participating in the R/WI Project. Many of the comments seemed to indicate that they *felt "good" about how much they had been able to help their students.* Participant responses supported the conclusion that *the participants believe the student outcome goals for the Project were met.*

Recommendation.

31. **Formal evaluation and follow-up procedures for each school should be developed, and these should correspond with the suggestions made in Recommendation 23.**

School and Classroom Conditions Needing Change or Improvement.

The most often mentioned improvements or changes were related to *the need for more time to share ideas and instructional strategies, and to make classroom visitations.*

Half of the participants also made *comments related to the need for additional staff.* Though they all had *different opinions about how additional staff might be used, all felt additional staff would have made things easier.* Like the idea that the Project needed additional funding, the perceived need for additional staff was continuously espoused by some participants. This idea contradicted the central theme of the Project -- the teacher as a responsible, independent and competent classroom manager. From the beginning, the participants knew that there would be no additional staff. We believe that with good classroom organization and management, and strong, public support from the administration, the Project can prosper without additional staff.

Other suggested improvements or changes were related to (a) *more involvement and stronger support from school administrators*; (b) *earmarking school funds for adding to or replacing instructional materials*; (c) *an accessible professional library*; (d) *continuing to foster and provide for professional development*; and (e) *ensuring that participation in the Project be on a voluntary basis.*

Recommendations.

32. The school division should earmark funds for adding to and replacing existing language arts materials in all classrooms.

33. Professional development efforts should continue and be based on the teachers' perceptions of their professional needs.

34. Participation in the Project should be on a voluntary basis.

Final Opinions About The Reading/Writing Immersion Project.

All six of the participants stated that *the Project helped to clarify their ideas and/or improve their classroom teaching.* Some of the participants noted that the sharing with colleagues gave them new techniques or skills (e.g., assessment skills, empowered, see children as learners, etc.). For others, it helped them to hone skills they already had. Specifically, skill areas developed or honed included (1) student assessment skills; (2) inquiry skills; (3) information about early intervention theories; (4) ways children learn and what they bring to the learning situation; and, (5) clarification of concepts and theories, and how to translate them into practice.

All six of the participants listed positive features of the Project. Features mentioned included the opportunity to (1) meet with other teachers to share ideas; (2) observe each other's classrooms; (3) reflect on what activities worked and didn't work; (4) share materials; (5) review and obtain children's books; (6) see their partners grow as professionals; and (7) grow and become empowered as a teacher.

Several negative features were also mentioned. The one mentioned most often was that the differences in each school site, and in individual conceptual levels, resulted in some group conflicts. This conflict may be the reason the teachers at the three schools only had one meeting in Year 3 of the Project. Other negative aspects mentioned were (1) participants from one school had negative feelings about their interactions with University personnel; (2) problems regarding the student outcome evaluation and report; and, (3) difficulties with the Division's handling of the grant moneys. The handling of the grant moneys and competition among the schools were also mentioned as problems in the Year 2 Report.

Suggestions for change included: (1) more time for meetings in Year 3; (2) role clarification for Student Support Branch personnel; (3) more support from other school staff; (4) more direct teaching of skills by the University personnel in Year 1; (5) better organization and goal setting by University personnel; (6) equal sharing of information among schools and

personnel; (7) less paper work to access moneys; (8) time built in for expansion teachers to attend inservices; and (9) properly equipped classrooms.

Four of the participants stated that they had learned a lot from the R/WI Project and would volunteer to take part again. One participant liked Year 1 because she learned a lot from the Project that year and stated she would volunteer for Year 1 again. However, she did not enjoy or get much out of the Project in Years 2 and 3, and would not volunteer for those two years again. One participant stated that the Project was poorly run and would not have elected to take part knowing what she knows now. *All the participants stated that they would recommend the Project to other schools and/or school divisions, but one would do so only if there were substantial changes.*

Recommendations.

35. **The Winnipeg School Division No. 1 should review the methods it uses to manage grant moneys. In all three years of the Project, participants complained about the difficulties they had trying to access the funds and to determine how much money was remaining.**

36. **Earlier, it was noted that Project participation should be voluntary. As well, steps should be taken to ensure that the prospective participants are knowledgeable of the philosophy, goals, objectives, and participant roles prior to the request for volunteers.**

Continuation of the Project.

At the time of the interviews, only one of the three schools stated that there was a firm commitment to continue the Project, in a similar form, next year. At this site the participants felt it would be continued because the principal wanted it to and there was Division funding available.

At a second site the participants weren't as certain about the continuation of the Project, but noted there were similar plans being made for next year. One noted that this would be the case because the school would always place emphasis on reading and writing.

At a third site it seemed quite clear that the Project will not be continued. Here the participants felt there wasn't enough interest in the Project at their school.

The fourth school, in the St. James-Assiniboia School Division No. 2, is continuing the Project in a different form. In fact, in that school division, the Project has been expanded into a number of additional schools.

The majority of the Project schools are continuing with some version of R/WI. The responses of the teachers who participated in the R/WI Project seemed to indicate that the Project should be continued and expanded. We agree.

APPENDIX A

TEACHER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

READING/WRITING IMMERSION: A DECISION MAKING LITERACY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

YEAR THREE TEACHER INTERVIEWS

APRIL, 1992

One of the conditions of the funding for this Project was that it be evaluated. The purpose of this interview is to collect information from classroom teachers and resource teachers in order to provide evaluative information to the funder and also to provide information that will assist in making improvements, if needed to the Project. As has been the case in previous years, **all responses will be kept completely confidential!**

The interview questions will be read and scored by the assigned research assistant. Only compiled data will be shared, not the individual answers. After the data has been compiled, you will be given a copy of the report.

Please listen to each question carefully. If you would like me to repeat a question, I will do so. The interview will take approximately 45 minutes to complete. If you have any questions concerning the interview, please feel free to ask me, or to call Paul Madak (474-8712), or Gerry Bravi (474-8772). We would like to thank you in advance for taking the time to assist us in the very important task of evaluating the Reading/Writing Immersion Project.

1. University personnel played a different role in Year 3 than in Years 1 and 2, please comment regarding this difference.

a. Did you request any assistance from University personnel?

b. If yes, what did you request?

c. What is your opinion of the assistance you received?

d. In retrospect, would you have changed anything for Year Three?

2. What is your opinion of the support the R/WI Project received in Year Three from:

a. Inner City Initiative?

b. Your principal?

3. With regards to Year Three R/WI group meetings:

a. How would you evaluate the value of these meetings?

b. If you had a chance to improve the organization of the group meetings, what would you change to bring about this improvement?

c. Given that this was a collaborative Project, were you satisfied with the role you played in organizing and developing agendas for the group meetings? Please provide a rationale for your answer.

4. Cooperative and collaborative partnership between participating classroom teachers and resource teachers was built into the R/WI Project. Please comment on this cooperation and collaboration in Year Three with regard to the following areas.

a. Do you feel that you have been given adequate time to consult and collaborate with your partner?

b Describe the role that each of you played in the Project, and how these roles were determined.

c. How successful do you feel the consultative - collaborative aspect of the Project has been? Please provide a rationale for this judgment.

d. If you were stating Year Three over, would you make any changes with regards to this partnership? If yes, what changes would you make?

5a. During Year Three, did you run R/WI activities with your whole class, a select group, or both?

5b. If with the whole class, describe these activities. Do these activities differ from those used last year, and if so how?

5c. If with a select group, how many kids are you working with in your classroom this year? How did you select them?

5d. Has group membership changed during the year? Why or why not?

5e. Describe the R/WI activities that you used with this group? Do these activities differ from those used last year, and if so how?

6a. Describe the R/WI activities you and your counterpart have carried out in additional classroom(s) in your school .

6b. How many other teachers have you worked with; and what grade level(s) do these teachers work?

6c. Do you feel that you have been given adequate time to consult and collaborate with other teachers?

6d. Describe the R/WI services you have provided to the teacher(s) and children [e.g., observing; ideas; etc.]

6e. With regards to the services describe in b above:

(1) what worked?;

(2) what didn't work?; and

(3) what would you do differently?

7a. Have you been able to obtain any feedback on Year One students? If so, what is your impression of their performance?

b. Do you feel that the students involvement in Year Two benefited from the Project? What is the bases for your impressions?

8. Did the Project provide you with any new skills this year? If so, what are they?

9. This Project was based on the belief that schools and teachers have the capacity to improve themselves if conditions are right. To sustain improvement in the schools and teachers involved in this Project, what conditions in your school do you think need to be changed or improved?

10. This was the final year of the R/WI Project. For the next series of questions, we ask that you keep in mind the entire three years. That is, for this series of questions we are asking you to provide us with your final assessment of the R/WI Project.

a. Has the Project helped you to clarify your own ideas about how to improve classroom/school instruction? If yes, please describe how. If no, please discuss why you think this didn't occur.

b. Has this Project provided you with new skills that you did not have? If yes, what were those skills?

c. What, if any, were the positive features of the R/WI Project?

d. What, if any, were the negative features of the R/WI Project?

e. What changes, if any, would you have made in order to improve the Project?

f. Knowing what you know now, would you volunteer all over again to take part in the R/WI Project? Please explain your response.

g. Would you recommend R/WI to other schools and/or school divisions? Please explain your response.

11. Does your school have plans to continue the R/WI next year? If "no", why not? If "yes", what are your plans?

THANK YOU!